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REMARKS

Applicants have studied the Office Action dated October 9, 2003 and have made amendments to the claims. Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(a) in that the amendment and remarks below place the application and claims in condition for allowance. It is submitted that the application, as amended, is in condition for allowance. By virtue of this amendment, claims 16-25 are pending. Claim 15 has been canceled without prejudice. Claims 18-20 have been amended. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicants submit that the claim amendments made herein do not raise new issues in the application. Claim 20 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 18 has been amended to depend from claim 20. Claim 19, which now depends from claims 18 and 20, has been amended to delete a limitation that is already present in claim 20. Thus, these changes do not raise new issues in the application. Applicants submit that the present amendment places the application in condition for allowance or, at least, presents the application in better form for appeal. Entry of the present amendment is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Greco et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,371,047). Claim 15 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Koyama (U.S. Patent No. 5,981,377). Claim 15 has been canceled so these rejections are moot.

Claims 18 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Greco et al. or Koyama. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 18 has been amended to depend from claim 20, and claim 22 depends from claim 18. Claim 20 has been indicated as being allowable over the art of record, and thus, claims 18

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and 22 should also be allowable over the art of record. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 18 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn.


Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 16, 17, and 23-25 are allowable over the art of record, and that claims 19-21 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 20 has been rewritten in independent form. Additionally, claims 19 and 21 depend from claim 20. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 16, 17, 19-21, and 23-25 are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application and the claims are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (561) 989-9811 should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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